

Letter from Alexander Graham Bell to Gardiner Greene Hubbard, November 1, 1877, with transcript

Letter from Alexander Graham Bell to Gardiner Greene Hubbard. 115 Jermyn Street. November 1st, 1877. Dear Mr. Hubbard:

Something must be done with the foreign patents or lose everything.

Applications from France, Belgium, Austria, Italy and etc., come in.

I feel that the rental system cannot be long retained unless where the telegraph lines erected are owned by the owner of the Telephone.

What we want from the European Patents is not — the greatest amount that can be realized — but — a return of some kind and as speedily as possible.

I know, from my own mind, that the instruments now used will soon be superseded by others of much improved form.

Why should we be forced to take back the old instruments when the new form comes. My advice for Europe is sell and o it quickly.

I could sell thousands in Europe now. Telephones are being manufactured must be done now. Better a large return now — than the magic prospect of an enormous return hereafter. My proposition is this.

Make me general Agent for the European Patents (except England with power to sell at whatever price I find the people will stand. In the bill of sale it will be stated that the instruments are only for use in the country where they are bought or any other provise you like.

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I will undertake the expense of starting the manufacture.

When money comes in from the sale of instruments — I will deduct expenses of manufacture, transport and etc., and account to you for the remainder, retaining whatever commission you like to give me.

I should propose 50 percent of the net receipts.

If you think well of this cable me as follows:

“Graham Bell, London — Yes — Hubbard.” and I will at once manufacture in Paris.

I enclose letters received from Monsieur Alfred Niaudet — one of the firm of Brequet Brothers — of Paris — the best electricians in France. I have given Mr. Niaudet telephones to exhibit in France.

I am terribly anxious in the matter for I see golden opportunities slipping through my fingers and I have no power.

I have taken patents in Italy, Norway, Sweden and Denmark, but no patents are granted in Holland or Switzerland and if I do not sell quickly here — Europe will be flooded with cheap telephones from Holland and Switzerland.

I am so convinced that I cannot from a distance control the rental of instruments that I intend to sell in all the countries under my own control. With love.

Your affectionate son, Alec. Gardiner G. Hubbard, New York.